

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable consideration of this application, as presently amended and in light of the following discussion, is respectfully requested.

Claims 9-12, 14, 17 and 24-27 are presently pending in this application, Claims 1-8, 13, 15, 16 and 18-23 having been canceled, Claims 9, 12, 14, 17 and 24 having been amended and Claims 26 and 27 having been newly added by the present amendment.

In the outstanding Office Action, Claims 1, 2, 5-10, 13, 14, 16 and 19-23 were provisionally rejected on the ground of nonstatutory obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over Claims 1, 2 and 8-11 of copending Application No. 10/588,209; Claims 4 and 12 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, for being indefinite; Claims 1-5, 9 and 10 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by Horiuchi et al. (U.S. Publication 2004/0159121); Claims 1-12 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Moreau (U.S. Publication 2002/0134538); and Claims 13, 14, 16 and 19-23 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Moreau. However, Claims 15, 17, 24 and 25 were indicated as including allowable subject matter; and Claim 18 was indicated as allowed.

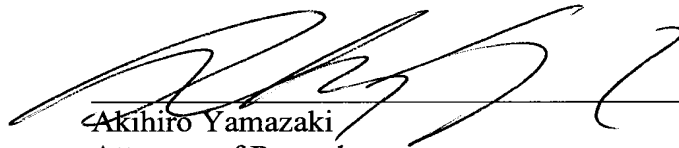
First, Applicant acknowledges with appreciation the indication that Claims 15, 17, 24 and 25 include allowable subject matter and Claim 18 was allowed. Accordingly, Claim 9 has been amended to incorporate the subject matter recited in Claim 15, Claim 12 has been amended to correct the noted antecedent basis, Claim 14 has been amended to depend from amended Claim 9, Claim 17 has been rewritten in an independent form, and Claim 24 has been amended to depend from amended Claim 9. Consequently, Applicant respectfully requests that Claims 1-8, 13, 15, 16 and 18-23 be canceled without prejudice.

Also, Claims 26 and 27 have been added herein. These new claims find support in the original claims, Claims 21 and 22, for example. Hence, no new matter is believed to be added thereby, and these claims are believed to be allowable along with the foregoing claims.

In light of the prior indication of allowable claims and in view of the amendments presented above, no further issues are believed to be outstanding, and the present application is believed to be in condition for allowance. If, however, the Examiner disagrees with any of the foregoing amendments, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned who will be happy to work in a joint effort to resolve remaining issues and expedite the prosecution of this application. Applicant respectfully requests an early and favorable action to that effect.

Respectfully submitted,

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